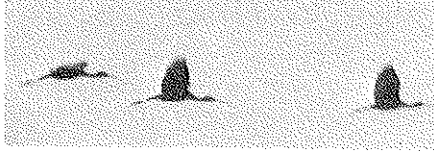


# THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

Vol. I, Number 1

May, 1965





Rare Visitors to New Waterfowl Refuge

(See Page 13)

A Periodical Published by the Mississippi Ornithological Society to Record and Further the Study of Mississippi Birdlife.

Vol. 1

May 1965

No. 1

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Front Cover: A pair of Mississippi Kites near nest in sweetgum tree in Eastover Subdivision, edge of Pearl River bottom in north Jackson, Mississippi, July 1964. One young Kite was ready to leave the nest when discovered by Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr., 1521 Poplar Boulevard, Jackson. Female is on left, male on right. Photo by W. H. Turcotte.

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## THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

### The President's Message

Nothing will re-inspire one ornithologically more than to go birding in another state or area. Your president has just returned from a sailing trip from Gulfport across the Gulf of Mexico to St. Petersburg, Florida, and on the Dry Tortugas.

Several trans-gulf migrants were visitors on the sailing sloop. A bob-o-link that was an overnight guest was so weak and exhausted that he expired the next day. Another bob-o-link landed on the stern of the boat calling to his mate to join him, and when she refused he remained only a few hours. Two female Cape May warblers flew in and enjoyed a light supper of raisins and potato chips. They became so friendly that they lit on our hats, heads, and shoulders and were our cabin mates until dawn's first rays.

Covering most of 16-acre Garden Key, one of seven islands that comprise the Dry Tortugas, is Fort Jefferson, an enormous structure begun in 1846, as part of a chain of sea-coast defenses. Inside and outside the fort, which is half a mile in perimeter, were many stragglers from a huge wave of migrants. The following species were observed at exceptionally close range: barn swallows, prairie warblers, grey-cheeked thrushes, Cape May warblers, black and white warblers, oven birds, black-throated blues, palm warblers, red starts, blackpolls, and yellow-throated warblers.

One of our great national wildlife spectacles occurs each year between May and September when the sooty terns assemble in numbers over 100,000 for their nesting season on Bush Key near Garden Key. Several hundred noddy terns, similar to the sooty in habit and size, nest with them in the low shrubbery. Dr. and Mrs. Bedford Floyd, members of our party, joined a group of Florida Audubon Society members and helped in their banding activities at Bush Key. As many as 200 frigate birds can be seen gliding endlessly on the thermal updrafts above the fort. These birds congregate during the tern season to enjoy an easy existence on fish pirated from the terns.

Mrs. Floyd and I returned to Gulfport by car from Key West via Sanibel Island, which is just south of Ft. Myers, Florida. We visited the "Ding" Darling Memorial Sanctuary where we had the unforgettable experience of seeing huge

(Continued page 15)

CONSTITUTION  
of the  
MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
(Adopted April 30, 1955)

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be the "Mississippi Ornithological Society."

Article II - Purpose

1. To encourage scientific research in the field of ornithology and to promote and encourage interest in greater appreciation and protection of native birds.
2. To cooperate with other organizations engaged in ornithological research and/or in the observation and study of birds.
3. To provide for the publication of a bulletin of ornithology to be known as "The Mississippi Kite."

Article III - Members

1. There shall be seven classes of memberships:

Active membership: Open to residents of Mississippi --  
Annual Dues \$2.00  
Corresponding membership: Open to non-residents of Miss.  
Annual Dues \$2.00  
Junior membership: Those under 17 years of age --  
Annual Dues \$2.00  
Sustaining membership: Annual Dues \$5.00 or over  
Associate membership: Annual Dues \$1.00  
Honorary membership  
Life membership - \$25.00 (Approved August, 1961, by vote  
of majority)

2. Active members shall be residents of Mississippi, who by reason of their scientific inclinations or their inborn love of birds and nature could be expected to sustain these interests and forward the work of the Society.
3. Corresponding members shall be non-residents of Mississippi without voting privileges.

4. Junior members shall be students under 17 years of age in any accredited high school or college who are recommended by a senior member. They shall not have the right to vote or hold office.
5. Sustaining members shall be those who pay \$5.00 or more in annual dues. They shall have full voting privileges.
6. Associate members shall be residents of Mississippi over 17 years of age without voting privileges.
7. Honorary members shall be elected upon recommendation of the Directors and confirmation by the voting membership.
8. Applicants for all classes of membership, other than honorary, shall become members upon payment of dues and approval of the Board of Directors. Membership may be dated as of January 1st or July 1st and the above dues shall include the cost of "The Mississippi Kite."
9. Members delinquent in dues over a year shall be dropped, but may be reinstated upon payment of current dues.

Article IV - Officers

The officers of the Society shall consist of a President, a First Vice-President, Regional Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Editor of the bulletin.

Article V - Duties of Officers

1. The President shall be the directing head of the Society and shall perform the usual duties of this office.
2. The First Vice-President shall serve in all capacities as the presiding officer in the absence of the President. He shall, at the request of the President, assist in the performance of any functions designated.
3. The Secretary shall keep a roster of the members, shall keep a complete record of the meetings, and shall prepare a report of the proceedings for publication.
4. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse all the funds of the Society and shall submit at the annual meetings a written report of all receipts and disbursements.

## THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

5. The Editor of the bulletin shall edit it and see to its publication.

## Article IV - Board of Directors

1. The executive body of the Society shall be known as the Board of Directors. It shall consist of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Editor of the bulletin. The retiring president shall serve one year as a member of the Board of Directors.
2. The Board of Directors shall have charge of the execution of the policies of the Society, shall govern the publication of the bulletin, shall determine the number of vice-presidents each year, and shall pass upon application for membership.

## Article VII - Election of Officers

1. A nominating committee appointed by the President shall submit to the annual meeting of the Society nominations for President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, and Editor. Nominations from the floor shall also be in order.
2. These officers shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting. Voting members shall consist of active members, sustaining members, and honorary members.

## Article VIII - Meetings

The Board of Directors shall have power to arrange for the time and place of all meetings of the Society.

## Article IX - Quorum

One-third of the members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting. In the absence of a quorum, business shall be transacted by mail.

## Article X - Program

The First Vice-President shall be chairman of the Program Committee for the annual meeting.

## Article XI - Amendments

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting by a

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four-fifths vote of those present, provided the number present constitutes a quorum. In the event it is necessary to vote by mail, because of the absence of a quorum, a majority of the voting membership must approve the amendment.

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CHARTER MEMBERSHIP  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
(April 30, 1955)

Mr. Andrew Allison, Ellisville, Mississippi  
Miss Lois Almon, State College, Mississippi  
Mrs. Amelia W. Blumenfeld, Starkville, Mississippi  
Miss Rena Breckenridge, Meridian, Mississippi  
Miss Ruth Castles, Nashville, Tennessee  
Dr. R. L. Caylor, Cleveland, Mississippi  
Mr. and Mrs. Ben B. Coffey, Jr., Memphis, Tennessee  
Miss Fannye A. Cook, Jackson, Mississippi  
Miss Sue R. Davidson, Jackson, Mississippi  
Dr. Charles L. Deevers, Clinton, Mississippi  
Rev. J. L. Dorn, New Orleans, Louisiana  
Mr. John Frazier, Hattiesburg, Mississippi  
Mr. Albert F. Ganier, Nashville, Tennessee  
Mrs. Dorothy R. Harper, Jackson, Mississippi  
Rev. T. J. Hatrel, New Orleans, Louisiana  
Mr. St. Clair Thompson, Crystal Springs, Mississippi  
Mr. Mayo Tolman, Picayune, Mississippi  
Mrs. Mayo Tolman, Picayune, Mississippi  
Mr. W. H. Turcotte, Jackson, Mississippi  
Miss Carol H. Webb, Mathiston, Mississippi  
Mr. John H. Phares, Jackson, Mississippi.

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## THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

## COOK MEMORIAL DEDICATION

By Eugene Palmer (Crystal Springs Meteor)



In a ceremony of dignity and simplicity, a martin bird house was dedicated to the Cook family and to the city in memory of Miss Fannye A. Cook. Mayor L. W. Kitchens made appropriate remarks to the family and friends of Miss Cook. Mr. Gilbert Cook of Canton, accepted the bird house for his family. Mr. Gandy, who is head of the Mississippi Museum, made a brief talk on the wonderful work that Miss Cook had done for the state.

Several other friends paid tribute to the memory of Miss Cook. Rev. John Speed opened and closed the ceremony with prayer.

Thanks go to the following for their help: Mr. Sells Newman, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Graves, Mr. Howard Nations, Mr. Jimmy Porter, Southern Builders and all others, who helped Eugene Palmer. Also, thanks to the following clubs for taking part: The D. A. R., The Floral Club, Camellia Garden Club, Crystal Gardners and Lions Club.

Pictured at the Cook memorial dedication left to right are: Mrs. Lucy Earl Hastings, Crystal Springs; Mrs. Hollomon Cook, Mr. Hollomon Cook, Jackson; Mrs. Lena Mae Brignac, Crystal Springs; Mrs. G. P. Cook, Mr. G. P. Cook, Canton; Mayor L. W. Kitchens, Rev. John Speed, Crystal Springs; and Mr. B. E. Gandy, of Jackson.

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In Memoriam: Miss Fannye A. Cook

By B. E. Gandy



Miss Frances A. Cook, better known to her friends and colleagues as Miss Fannye A. Cook, was a native of Crystal Springs, Mississippi.

A graduate of Crystal Springs High School, Miss Cook received her bachelor's degree from Mississippi State College for Women. She taught History and English Literature at West Point and Louisville, Mississippi, and in Panama, and Wyoming. By-passing a master's degree to work directly toward a doctorate, Miss Cook majored in ornithology at the University of Colorado and at George Washington University. Studying science at night at the latter university, she completed all the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts except the thesis. She spent a year at the Smithsonian doing research and preparing specimens of plants and animals she had collected.

For a while Miss Cook was employed as auditor of income tax returns for the Bureau of Internal Revenue in Washington, D. C.

In 1926, after observing the damage done to her native state's resources following two years of drought and fire, Miss Cook dropped her studies and resigned her job in Washington to return to Mississippi and spearhead a drive for conservation.

She began her campaign with a poster display at the Laurel Fair. At the request of officials she also placed the exhibit in the Meridian Fair the same year. There her posters showing the usefulness of birds in combating harmful insects attracted Professor R. W. Harned, head of the State Plant Board. The board was then concerned with the insect problem and Professor Harned asked Miss Cook to go to State College where she was given space for research and promotion.

For five years Miss Cook traveled from one end of the state to the other, mostly at her own expense and without salary, pointing out the need for a state agency to protect

## THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

and preserve the state's last vanishing wildlife. Her message was brought before schools, clubs, and at various fairs where she prepared wildlife exhibits. She encountered much opposition because market hunting was quite common.

Miss Cook was aided in the fight by Dr. W. F. Bond, the late Wiley P. Harris, J. W. Tucker, and other conservation-minded citizens. In 1927 Miss Cook organized the Mississippi Association for the Conservation of Wildlife, serving as executive secretary. This group was instrumental in improving conditions, and in cooperation with the American Legion and various other clubs was largely responsible for legislation creating the State Game and Fish Commission. A bill was presented to the Legislature in 1928, in the hope of establishing a conservation department. It failed. Four years later in 1932, the Legislature under Mike Conner, established the present State Game and Fish Commission.

In the fall of 1932, Miss Cook was appointed by the Game and Fish Commission as research assistant to the director. During her early years with the Commission she frequently conducted game censuses in rugged terrain and camped out under primitive conditions. Working on a survey of freshwater fishes, she often waded Mississippi streams to collect specimens.

In 1935 Miss Cook planned a State Plant and Animal Survey. This project was financed by the Works Progress Administration and sponsored by the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission in cooperation with the State colleges. Miss Cook was leader of the project and from 1935 to 1941, all her attention was directed to this assignment. During this project 18 district museums were established and her dream of a state museum was realized when the Wildlife Museum was opened to the public as a permanent state museum on January 3, 1939. Miss Cook was director and curator of the museum from its inception in 1933 until her retirement December 31, 1958.

Upon her retirement the employees of the Commission sponsored an appreciation dinner honoring Miss Cook for 26 years of public service in wildlife conservation. State dignitaries present included the principal speakers, Governor J. P. Coleman and Judge W. E. McIntyre.

During her years with the Commission Miss Cook wrote numerous articles and survey bulletins about the wildlife of Mississippi, including a 103-page bulletin entitled "Game

## THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

Birds of Mississippi." Articles by Miss Cook were published in Mississippi Game and Fish, Mississippi Ornithological Society Newsletter, Journal of the Mississippi Academy of Science, Copeia and the Journal of Mammalogy. As a fitting climax to her life's work, Miss Cook wrote a book, "Fresh-water Fishes in Mississippi," published by the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission in 1959. This book was recognized nationally and praised highly by fisheries experts.

Miss Cook was instrumental in organizing the Mississippi Ornithological Society on April 30, 1955, and was its first president, serving for two years. She was serving a third term as president of the society at the time of her death.

Miss Cook was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a member of the Mississippi Academy of Science, American Ornithologists' Union, Wilson Ornithological Society, Louisiana, Tennessee and Alabama Ornithological Societies, the American Society of Mammalogists, American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, the Mississippi Genealogical Society and the Daughters of the American Revolution. A counselor for Scouts, she enjoyed working with the youth of Mississippi as shown by the fact that she had taken some young people on a bird trip the day before her death.

In May of 1964, the Mississippi Legislature passed a resolution commending the life of Miss Fannye A. Cook, and particularly her contributions to wildlife conservation in Mississippi, and recommending that the State Wildlife Museum be named in her honor. On July 14, 1964, the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission approved the name for the museum as the State Wildlife Museum, the Fannye A. Cook Memorial.

No more fitting tribute could be paid than the words contained in the resolution passed by the Mississippi Legislature which stated in part: "Now, therefore, be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, the Senate concurring therein, that the life of the late Miss Fannye A. Cook who passed away on April 30, 1964, is honorably commended and pointed out as an example for all Mississippians to admire and seek to emulate for her contribution to wildlife conservation and for her example as a patriotic leader."

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MOS MEETING - NATCHEZ - APRIL 16, 1965

The Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Ornithological Society was held at the Carriage House Restaurant, Natchez, Mississippi, Friday, April 16, 1965. Mrs. C. Hal Cleveland, President, presided.

Mrs. Cleveland suggested that a change be made in the By-laws reducing the number of members present to form a quorum. Under the present By-laws it is never possible to secure a quorum at a meeting and all official business has to be conducted by correspondence at a later date. This recommendation was approved by those present and recommended to the membership.

Mrs. Cleveland announced that it was her intention to encourage the formation of local societies throughout the State. The J. W. Tucker, Sr., award was presented to Mrs. T. H. Hannah and Mrs. Lucy Earl Hastings, sisters of the late Miss Frances A. Cook attending the meeting, as a token of appreciation and in memory of the outstanding work done in Mississippi by Miss Cook.

The meeting was concluded with a program of slides given by Dr. Clifford Tillman of Natchez, showing pictures taken by him of birds found in the Natchez area. Dr. Tillman spent a great deal of time and artistic ability in the taking and arrangement of these slides.

The meeting was attended by Mr. and Mrs. David Aldridge, Mrs. Edna W. Campbell, Miss Clara Chamberlain, Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Greer, Mr. and Mrs. Graham H. Hicks, Bazile, Jr., Rene and Rose Lanneau, Mr. and Mrs. Orrick Metcalfe, Mr. and Mrs. Albert W. Metcalfe, Dr. Orrick Metcalfe, Mr. and Mrs. D. G. McLaurin, Mr. Norman Stattman, Dr. and Mrs. Clifford Tillman, all of Natchez; Mrs. C. Hal Cleveland and her two sons from Mississippi City; Mrs. T. H. Hannah from Forest, and Mrs. Lucy Earl Hastings of Crystal Springs; Mrs. W. G. Wills, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Turcotte and their daughter, Terry, and Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Johnson and two sons, all of Jackson.

On Saturday morning the members were given an opportunity to have a choice of two field trips; one trip was north of Natchez on the Natchez Trace to the Emerald Mound area, conducted by Mrs. David Aldridge, with emphasis on land birds. The other trip, conducted by Orrick Metcalfe, crossed over into Louisiana, followed the Mississippi River levee past the Whitehall Lake several miles down to Lucerne Plantation, then

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crossed by a circuitous country road over to Ferriday, Louisiana. A few of the members later circled to Lake St. John and then followed the levee back to Vidalia, Louisiana.

In Ferriday the group visited the wood-duck breeding cages which for a number of years have been operated by Mr. A. E. Torres, a MOS member. Mr. Torres has nearly 200 breeding wood-ducks and combined with them a smattering of other ducks including hybrids and several varieties of wild geese. Mr. Torres releases some of these ducks locally and has on occasion furnished them to the Wild Life and Fisheries Commission of the State of Louisiana in the hope of developing the wood-duck population in other areas of the state.

Eighty-seven (87) species were identified by the two party trips; besides the ordinary birds which we see daily there were included in this list the Little Blue Heron, Cattle and Common Egret, White-faced Ibis, Blue-wing Teal and Wood Duck, the Sharpshinned, Red Shouldered, Red Tailed and Broad Winged Hawks, Coot, Killdeer, Upland and Golden Plovers, the Common Snipe, the Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, the Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, the Pectoral and Semi-palmated Sandpipers, the Great Crested and Acadian Flycatchers, the Rough Winged and Barn Swallows, the Purple Martin, the Carolina Chickadees, the Tufted Titmouse, the Hermit Thrush, the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, the Ruby Crowned Kinglet, the Cedar Waxwing, White-eyed, Yellow-throated, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, the Prothonotary, Parula, Yellow and Myrtle Warblers, the Louisiana Waterthrush, the Yellow-breasted Chat, the Hooded Warbler, the Bobo-link, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, the Summer Tanager, the Blue Grosbeak, the Indigo and Painted Buntings, the Rufous Towhee, and the Savannah, Chipping, White Crowned and White-throated Sparrows.

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MOS FIELD NOTES

Fulvous Tree duck: Burton S. Webster, Refuge Manager, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Brooksville, Mississippi, reports in a letter to the editor, dated March 15, 1965: "You will be interested to know we banded a Fulvous tree duck on the Doyle (Creek) Arm of Bluff Lake (Noxubee County) on February 26, 1965. This is a record for Noxubee." This, also, may be a new record for this bird in Mississippi, although its passage to regions east of the state and points along the Atlantic Coast have been recorded. W. H. Turcotte,

The Spring Season -- Beginning about March 10 - 11, there were numerous reports of massive migration movements of Blue and Snow Geese. State newspapers carried accounts of migrating geese. On the night of March 11, the editor stopped at an all-night service station before dawn at Canton, Mississippi, and several flocks of geese were heard flying northward within a short period. The attendant reported hearing geese fly over most of the night. On March 24 and 25, the editor and Jacob Valentine, Management Biologist, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, visited the Sandhill Crane territory of Jackson County. Four or six (possibly) mated pairs were seen and others were heard at dusk and after nightfall at the south end of Ben Williams' pond. On March 25 a single Cattle Egret was recorded at Fountainebleau. The bird, evidently a new arrival, was beside Highway 90 in a ditch and seemed to have very weak flight. On March 27 numerous Blue-winged teal, all mated pairs, were seen at several locations in Yazoo County in 20 - 30 pair groups. Again, on the Ross Barnett Reservoir 60 Bluewings and 50 Lesser Scaup were recorded at the dam and 50 Bluewings, 300 Shovellers and numerous Coots were seen in the waterfowl refuge at Highway 43. Four Glossy Ibis were observed on April 1 and photographed (see inside front cover) on the waterfowl refuge area on the Reservoir in Madison County (WMT). These birds were feeding at the edge of the water of a flooded pasture just north of the pecan orchard at Highway 43 crossing. Apparently, these same birds and two others were first seen by Mrs. E. C. Bowers, Jr., at the same location on March 30 and 31, and tentatively identified as Glossy Ibis and described by letter to the editor dated April 2. Mrs. Bowers recorded two Yellow-crowned Night Herons feeding in a wet pasture four miles north of By Wyah overlook on the Parkway. Yellow Crowns and possibly Little Blues showed indications of possible nesting in the timbered part of the flooded waterfowl refuge on May 5. Six or more of these birds were seen trafficking back and forth towards the Barnett Reservoir

from this area. Three Pied-billed Grebes were nest-building or sitting in plain view 150 feet north of Highway 43 crossing in the flooded broomsedge field on April 22 (WHT). Eighty-seven (87) Golden Plovers were counted April 2 in a pasture one mile south of Moorhead, Miss., and 37 were observed in north Issaquena County with 50 Lesser and 9 Greater Yellowlegs on March 30 following a rain in flooded pasture (W. H. Turcotte and Henry Bobbs, Jr.). One Lesser Yellowlegs and a Jacksnipe were seen on Ross Barnett Reservoir (Madison County) on April 1 (WHT). Six Widgeon, five Gadwall were recorded near Scott, Miss., Bolivar County, on April 2 (WHT). A Solitary Vireo, carefully studied at close range with binoculars, was identified at Merigold Hunting Club, Bolivar County on April 2 (WHT). A single Common Loon in breeding plumage was recorded on Lake Lee (300 acres) near Saltillo, Mississippi, in Lee County on April 15 (WHT).

First Arrivals - 1965 Season: 3 Prothonotary Warblers, Yazoo County, March 27 (WHT); Harrison County, March 1, one bird (Mrs. George R. Smith, Pass Christian, Miss., Purple Martin, Feb. 10, Harrison County, 18 pairs on March 16 (Mrs. GRS). March 28 Northern Waterthrush (studied at length with binoculars - distinctly yellow sides, heavily streaked) Hinds County, west of Jackson (WHT), Black and White Warbler, Rankin County, March 29, Red-eyed Vireo, Hinds County, April 1, Kingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Rankin Co., April 1. Parula Warbler, Yazoo County, April 2, Summer Tanager, Cr. Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Warbler, Swainson Warbler, Amite County, 8 miles south of Liberty, Miss., April 5. W. H. Turcotte.

Spring Nesting Records: On April 19 Jacob Valentine and W. H. Turcotte found a Sandhill Crane nest with two eggs at Ben Williams pond in Jackson County, Mississippi. Both birds were at the nest. Three Cranes and six dummy or old nests with newly-added material were found at another location within a one hundred yard radius on Upper Perrigault Bayou north of Fort Bayou. One Crane but no sign of nesting was found at Bear Pond just north of Fontainebleau, Miss., on April 20. On April 20 a Red-cockaded Woodpecker nest, with both birds present, was in a living slash pine trunk about 15 feet above ground. Bark on the tree had been scaled off all around below and above nest cavity and a few new, small "cat-faces" pecked above the nest hole, exuding resin. The birds were probably laying as the male was seen trying to copulate with female. Nest tree location was about one mile north of Hilda Fire Tower on the Hilda Tower Road, Jackson County, Mississippi, in very open country



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among scattered pines. Another active Red-cockaded Woodpecker nest was found on April 30 along the Scenic Trail Road (FS 102) between Garden City and Highway 84 southwest of Meadville, Mississippi, Franklin County. This nest tree was beside this very high ridge road. Bark had been chipped above and below nest entrance with resinous "catfaces" above. Birds were not in evidence at nest. A pair of Robins raised a brood of young in nest on horizontal pine limb at my home west of Jackson, Hinds County. Young left the nest on May 6. A Wood Thrush sitting on nest in woods at my home, May 2. Starling nest with young in louvre of my house on May 2. The first Bluebird nest (with four eggs) seen in several years was found in Amite County, 8 miles south of Liberty, Mississippi, on April 6. This nest was in a crevice in a building about eight feet above ground. W. H. Turcotte

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## President's Message (Cont. from page 2)

numbers of roseate spoonbills, white ibis, brown pelicans, reddish egrets, little blue herons, snowy egrets, Louisiana herons, black-necked stilts, black-crowned night herons, great blue herons, and common egrets. We can recommend unreservedly a trip to charming Sanibel Island as an outstanding avian pleasure.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you a happy summer and to ask that you help make your Society better and stronger by participating in our activities and being responsible for adding one new member to our rolls for the coming year.

Marjie Cleveland

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The Prairie Warbler

The Prairie Warbler is not a bird of the open prairie, but of cutover woodlands or clearings growing up in thickets. Bent, in Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers, says "Perhaps it was given the name because it has been found on the so-called prairies or flat, grassy lands among trees in the Southern states."

In Mississippi the Prairie Warbler seems to prefer cutover hillsides or ridges with mixed stands of pine, scrub oak and hardwoods and an undergrowth of bushes and shrubs such as blueberry, huckleberry, myrtle, yaupon or oak sprouts. Sometimes they are found in abandoned agricultural land or pastures growing up with sage grass, bushes and young trees.

The Prairie Warbler winters from central Florida south through the West Indies and islands off Mexico and Central America from Quintana Roo to Nicaragua. It breeds from southeastern South Dakota, Iowa, southern Wisconsin, northern Michigan, southern Ontario, southeastern New York, southern Vermont and southern New Hampshire south to eastern Oklahoma, southern Louisiana, Mississippi, southern Alabama and central Georgia. In Florida and the Florida Keys a geographic race known as the Florida Prairie Warbler is found.

Arriving in Mississippi the middle of March, the Prairie Warbler is a spring and fall transient on the offshore Gulf islands, the Mississippi Coast, and apparently in the Yazoo Delta. To date we have one spring record for the delta and no fall records. Extreme dates of spring migration are March 18 and May 1. It is a locally common summer resident of Rankin and Lafayette Counties, likely anywhere east of the Loess Bluffs, from Jones County north to Tishomingo County.

A sight record of young in Pearl River County and observations of abandoned nest and males singing in April in the Sandhill Crane territory of Jackson County indicates that it also nests, at least locally, in the extreme southern part of Mississippi.

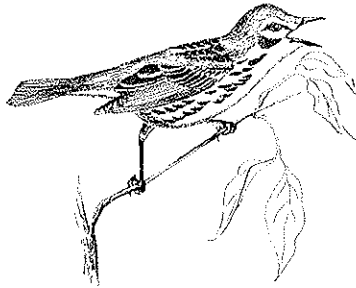
This warbler feeds upon winged insects, spiders and caterpillars obtained from low bushes and occasionally in the treetops.

The nest is made of plant fibers, grass and fine leaves, lined with rootlets, hair and a few feathers and is usually

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The Prairie Warbler

placed from three or four feet from the ground and artfully concealed among leaves in low bushes or small trees. One nest found in Tishomingo County was in a burned-over broomsedge



opening four inches from the ground in a low bush surrounded by other bushes, vines and broomsedge.

Another nest 18 inches from the ground in a huckleberry bush was found by a field worker who stated:

The Prairie Warbler seems to prefer the huckleberry bush as almost all nests found have been in them on cutover hillsides." The three to five eggs, usually four, are white, finely spotted with reddish-brown.

The breeding population apparently leaves its nesting ground by the end of August. The latest record for all but the coastal counties is August 30. Migrants begin to arrive on the coast by July 22, where they are fairly common in scrubby growths of pine and oak until late September. They have been observed on Deer Island as late as October 29. There are no winter records.

Adult male Prairie Warblers are yellowish-green above with distinctive chestnut streaking on the back and yellow faces and underparts. A black stripe extends thru the eye and another V-shaped one is located below the eye. The sides of the head, neck and body are heavily streaked with black and there are two light yellow wing bars. The female is similar but paler and streaking is less extensive. Immatures in the fall possess only a faint dusky indication of the black markings of the adults and the wing bars are faint or absent. However, the yellow underparts, a dusky mark on the side of the neck and the bird's habit of wagging its tail are identifying features.

The song is a series of short buzzy notes rapidly uttered on a rapidly-ascending scale, ending at a very high pitch. The song is most distinctive because of the high-pitched ascending, buzzing notes and is comparable in pitch only to the black and white warbler in this respect. The distinctive song is the best clue to locating and finding the Prairie Warbler. -- B. E. Gandy

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Mississippi Ornithological Society

Organized April 30, 1955

Officers

President: Mrs. C. Hal Cleveland, 1916 Beach Drive,  
Mississippi City, Mississippi

Regional Vice-President: Mr. Orrick Metcalf, "The  
Parsonage," Natchez, Mississippi

Secretary-Treasurer: Mr. B. E. Gandy, 111 North  
Jefferson, Jackson, Mississippi

Editor: Mr. W. H. Turcotte, Route 2, Box 43,  
Jackson, Mississippi

MOS Memberships

Honorary, No dues	Active (Resident)
Active, \$2.00 annually	\$2.00 annually
Life, \$25.00	Associate (Resident)
Sustaining, \$5.00 annually	\$1.00 annually
Corresponding (Non-resident)	Junior (Students under
\$2.00 annually	17) \$1.00 annually

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